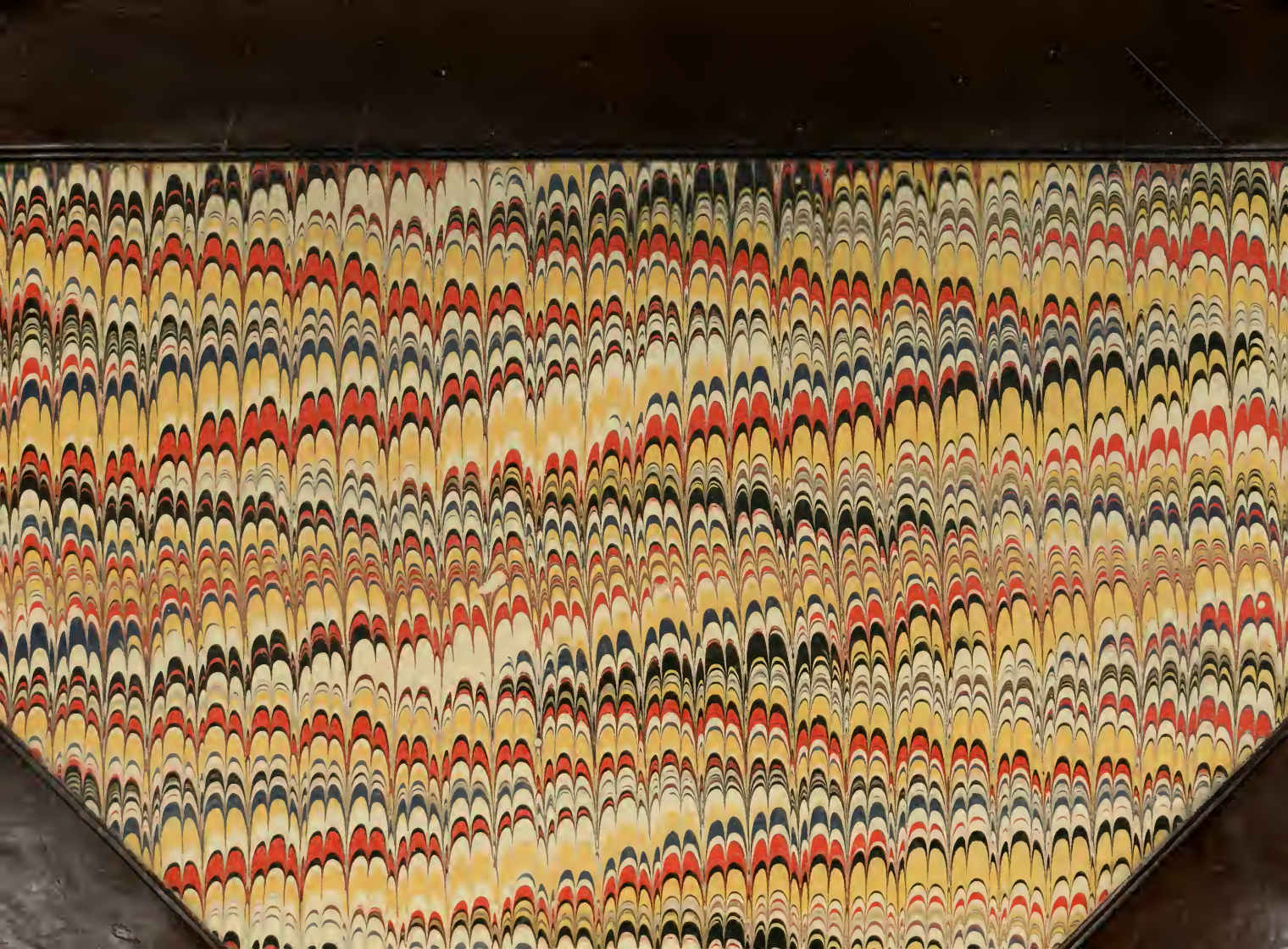

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A

LETTER

TO A

Member of Parliament,

Shewing the Neceſſity of

Regulating the PRESS:

CHIEFLY

From the Neceſſity of Publick Eſtabliſhments in RELIGION.

From the Rights and Immunities of a National CHURCH.

And the Truſt repoſed in the Chriſtian Magiſtrate to Protect and Defend them.

WITH

A Particular ANSWER *to the* OBJECTIONS *that of late have been Advanced againſt it.*

OXFORD:

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A LETTER TO A Member of Parliament;

SHEWING

The Neceſſity of Regulating the PRESS: *With a Particular* ANSWER *to the* OBJECTIONS *that of late have been advanced againſt it.*

SIR,

YOU have been pleas'd to ſollicite my Opinion in a Matter of Importance, by way of Requeſt, when You might *have* juſtly *lay'd Your* Commands; and I now preſent it with all imaginable *Deference* and *Humility*. You have led me into a large Field of *Argument*, and propos'd ſeveral *weighty Enquiries*; but ſince they are advanced with regard to a

General Deſign, viz. The *Liberty of the* PRESS; I ſhall not bind my ſelf up to that Order they are propos'd in, but ſhall ſpeak to them, as they will beſt comport with the Scheme I have projected, to evince the *Expediency* of *Reſtraining the Preſs*.

In order to this Deſign, I ſhall reduce them to three or four General Enquiries.

As firſt, *How far the Duty of the Civil Governing Powers extends in Matters of Religion*?

Secondly, *When there are two or more Sects of Religion in any Government, why the Magiſtrate is under an Obligation of protecting, or rather advancing the one, more than the other*: And on this Head I ſhall conſider the Rights and Authority of a National Church.

Thirdly, *Whether the Reſtraint of the Preſs is not a neceſſary proviſion, not only to advance the Intereſts of the true Religion, but to preſerve and maintain the Ends and Deſigns of it, as profeſs'd in a National Church*?

SECT.

SECT. I. I begin with an *Enquiry into the Duty of the Civil Governing Powers in Matters of Religion.*

And, Firſt, It will be received as an indiſputable *Article*, or *Propoſition*, That every *Governing Power* (of *Duty* as well as *Right*) is ſo far to inſpect the Affair of *Religion*, that nothing be advanced, that manifeſtly incommodes the Rights or Intereſts of the *Civil Polity*: But whether any Government, is under a further Concern or Obligation, ſeems to be the Caſe under debate. Now it will beſt be adjuſted by conſidering the *Nature* and *Deſign* of Civil Government; firſt under a ſtate of *Nature*, and ſecondly under a ſtate of *Revelation.*

That Government in general is an *Ordinance of* GOD, *by Divine Inſtitution*, as well as *Allowance*, and conſequently that there are certain *Ends* and *Deſigns* peculiar to it, eſtabliſhed in the ſame Authority, are Truths that will be eaſily ſubſcribed to. But then if Government reſts on a *Divine Original*, and there are certain Divine Ends and Purpoſes appropriate to it; it cannot well be imagin'd that the *Civil*

Welfare and Conduct of Mankind, is the ſole and entire Province of the *Civil Magiſtrate*. If *Religion* is the moſt important Concern of Mankind; and if there's *Fealty*, *Worſhip*, and *Obedience*, due from a *Creature* towards a Sovereign *Creator*, even under the moſt ſimple ſtate of Nature; why ſhould not that Great GOD, which conſtitutes the Civil Magiſtrates *Superintendants* over the Secular affairs of Mankind, be as zealous to make them *Guardians* of thoſe things that are placed more near him, and them too, his *Honour* and *Glory*? And therefore I'm perſwaded it's neither Boldneſs nor Arrogance to pronounce, That the Civil *Governing Power*, or *Magiſtrate*, was originally conſtituted for the Conduct of Mankind, in all the Inſtances of *Humán Happineſs*; and conſequently in a *Religious* as well as *Civil* Capacity. Indeed the inſeparable Dependance and Affinity, between *Civil Happineſs* and *Religion*, (were other Arguments wanting) is alone ſufficient to evince it: But were the Experience of Mankind, and the univerſal Practice of all Civiliz'd Governments, ſummoned in to decide the Con-

Controverſy, they muſt place it above Diſpute, or Cavil. If we reſpect the earlieſts Accounts of Governments, and particularly thoſe delivered in Sacred Story, we find the Characters of *Prince* and *Prieſt*, reſiding in the ſame Perſon.

Before GOD had inſtituted a *poſitive Oeconomy* of Religion, and a peculiar Order of *Prieſthood*, it was part of the *Patriarchal* province, not only to inſtruct their People to *call upon the Name of the Lord*, but to wait on the very *Altar*; and perform the Prieſtly Function of *Sacrifices*. As *it's highly probable from the Hiſtory of the Creation*, the firſt Governments of the World, had their Riſe and Foundation in Fathers of Families; ſo we are undoubtedly inſtructed that they obtained the Character of *Patres patriæ*, by executing all the Offices of a *Parent*, as well as *King*. *Abraham* had no doubt his Duty repreſented as a *Prince*, as well as *Maſter* of a *Family*, under the Compliment of a Divine Confidence: for *I know him that he will command his Children, and his houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment*, *Gen.*

Gen. 18. 19. And truly ſince both *Prince* and *Parent*, have the Impreſs of *Divine Authority* upon 'em; and there is ſuch a ſtrict Affinity and Correſpondence between 'em, from the original frame of things; if the Character of a *Parent* extends to a *Religious* as well as *Civil* Capacity, it cannot well be diſputed, but that of a *Prince* carries the ſame extent and latitude. And therefore it may ſafely be concluded, that it was a point of Duty in the *Magiſtrate*, antecedent to any *poſitive Oeconomy* of *Religion*, to promote the Intereſts, if not execute the Spiritual Functions of *Religion*, as well as advance the Welfare of the State: And very probably it was a Divine Inſtitution, as ancient and primitive as Government it ſelf.

And certainly the Model of all Heathen Governments confirms the Notion. It's well known the *Egyptian Monarchs* (Famous in the earlieſt Records) bare the Character of *Prieſt*, as well as *King*. The *Chineſe* to this Day, look upon the Prieſthood to bear ſo near a Relation to that of the Empire, that the moſt Solemn Myſteries of Religion, are ſtill a Prerogative pecu-

peculiar to the *Sovereign*. Religion in the Eaſtern and Weſtern parts of *Europe*, was always ſo much the Buſineſs of Government, that if the publick Acts and Offices of Religion were not immediately perform'd by the *Magiſtrate*, they were conſtantly directed, and enforc'd by him. If the publick Defence of a Countrey, where its Territories were enlarged and extended, diverted him from attending the *Altar*, it was his ſpecial Care to conſtitute a *Prieſthood*, and regulate the Affairs of *Religion*, by publick Laws and Sanctions: theſe are ſuch known and allow'd Truths, and ſo well atteſted, in the Learning of the *Greeks* and *Latins*, that I ſhall not now appeal to *Authors*; and they are all convincing Evidences, that one End of Government, in the original Frame and Model of it, was to *inſpect* the Conduct of Mankind in the *Affairs* of *Religion*. Thus far not only the *Duty*, but *Prerogative* of the *Magiſtrate* diſcovers it ſelf in a State of Nature, antecedent to Revelation.

SECT.

SECT. II. It remains that we consider it under a positive Oeconomy of Religion.

And, first, under that of the *Jews*. Now tho' GOD thought fit upon the first positive Establishment of Religion, to institute an Order of Men, and separate them from the rest of the People, to attend at his *Altar*, to *offer for themselves, and the sins of others*; yet it's manifest he did not exempt the Civil *Magistrate* from inspecting the Affairs of *Religion*. No, it was his special Duty, to protect and defend the *True Religion*; to punish and suppress *Idolatry*, *Seducers*, and *False Prophets*, and to make such wholesom provisions, as served the cause of Religion, in the enforcement of its *Publick Acts* and *Offices*, and in the Advancement of its *Ends* and *Designs*. The Sacred Writings have delivered so many Instances, and Rules of this Nature, that it is wholly needless to enlarge in an express Citation. It's well known he often directed the Building of places of *Religious Worship*, enjoyn'd *Fasts*; and in a word, interpos'd in most of the Circumstantials of *Religion*. Now it's certain

certain these were not bare *Arbitrary Offices*, and the product of a *Voluntary Zeal*; but they were either the immediate Instruction of *Heaven*, or the effects of some *General Precepts*; and consequently were intended as standing Instances of *Duty*. If we examine the œconomy of the *Gospel*, we must conclude, That as we have not the least hint that any ways abridges the *Rights* and *Authority* of the Civil *Magistrate*, further than they were exercised under the *Law*, so we do not find the least Exemption from any Moral point of *Duty* in the Affairs of *Religion*, to which they were antecedently bound. Now it cannot be deny'd, but that the Nature and State of the *Christian Church* is frequently describ'd in the Writings of the *Prophets*: And among those various Descriptions, the Character of *Christian Kings* and *Princes*, recorded by the Prophet *Isaiah*, is as glorious as it is remarkable: *And Kings shall be thy nursing Fathers, and their Queens thy nursing Mothers———for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me, Isa. 44. v. 23.* This Passage is unanimously interpreted

of the *Christian Magistrate;* and certainly we are not to receive it as a Prediction of a *Contingent Blessing*, or *Matter of Fact*, but agreeable to the *Prophetick* Style (which often exhibits Duties, under simple Predictions) as carrying the Force of a *Precept* in it. Thus we see the *Magistrate* is not only *Pater Patriæ*, but *Pater Ecclesiæ*. This is his *Character*, and his *Duty:* and certainly, if he answers the Designs of it, he must not only *cherish*, but *protect*, and *defend* the *Church* of *Christ;* and in a word, liberally minister to it, whatever is necessary for its *Support* and *Preservation*. Upon the whole then, we may justly conclude, That tho' GOD, under the *Jewish*, as well as *Gospel* œconomy, was pleased to select a peculiar Order of Men, to wait on his Altar, and more immediately prosecute all the Designs of Religion; yet the Civil Magistrate still rightfully ministers to the same Designs in all Cases, where GOD has not interposed by some *Positive Rule*, or *Precept;* so that he's still the *Supreme Guardian* and *Protector*, in the *œconomy* of *Religion*, as well as *Civil Polity*. He's *Custos utriusque*

uſque Tabulæ; that is, he's not only entruſted to enforce the Obſervance of all *Social Vertues,* upon which the *Peace* and *Intereſt* of Government moves, as upon its *Axis;* but a *True* and *Orthodox Faith,* and a *pure Worſhip,* and the *Honour* and *Glory* of that *Great* GOD, that has made him his *Vicegerent* and *Repreſentative;* and by whoſe *Protection* and *Bleſſing* he's enabled to anſwer the *Deſigns* of his *Character.*

From hence the Diſ-ingenuity, or rather Impiety of ſome late deſigning Poſitions, abundantly diſcover themſelves; viz. *That the care of* Religion *is no real Branch of the* Magiſtrate's *Office; that he's no further concerned for it, than as it immediately conduces to the Civil Weal and Intereſt of every particular Conſtitution or Government; and in a word, That for the advance of a National Trade or Wealth, he may treat all Sects of* Religion *with equal privileges and reſpect.* But certainly the care of Religion can now no longer be diſputed, to be an *Indiſpenſible Duty* in the Magiſtrate; ſince it appears not only that every Poſitive Oeconomy of Religion, has

expreſly taught it; but the very *Nature*, *Deſigns*, and *Reaſons* of the *Character*, dictate it.

But then, if this be admitted, we muſt grant that there is a *True* and a *Falſe Religion*, and an *Orthodox* and *Heterodox Faith*; that the true Religion is eſtabliſhed on certain Laws, and Immunities, which in the ordinary courſe of Providence, are neceſſary to the Preſervation of it; and conſequently we muſt conclude, That it's an Indiſpenſible Duty in the Magiſtrate, to have recourſe to the moſt proper Methods for enquiring into the *Reaſons* and *Grounds* of *Religion*; and for diſtinguiſhing the *True Religion* from the *Falſe*, and an *Orthodox* from an *Heterodox Faith*; whether by applying to the proper *Miniſters* of *Religion*, *ſeparately*, or in *Council*. And upon a fair and impartial Enquiry, that which appears to be True and Orthodox, is to be *cheriſhed*, *defended*, and *promoted*, againſt all Attempts and Invaſions of the *Heterodox* and *Unbeliever*; even tho' ſome preſent Temporal Intereſt ſeem to claſh and interfere with it. Theſe were the *Unalterable Laws* and *Principles* of

of the firſt and *moſt pious Chriſtian Emperors*, upon which they enlarged the *Territories* of the Chriſtian Church.

SECT. III. But to this 'tis *popularly* reply'd, That if Kings and Princes once thought themſelves obliged to eſpouſe the Care of Religion, as a poſitive Duty (conſidering the Errors and Superſtitions of Mankind) it would prove the moſt effectual Method, not only to obſtruct the growth of the True Religion, but endanger the Extirpation of it. But in anſwer to this, it's to be conſidered, That the Propagation of Religion does not direct to Acts of force and violence, much leſs the Protection of it; except where the Rights and Immunities of the Eſtabliſhed Religion are apparently invaded. Beſides it's concluded the Magiſtrate is not to proceed *blindly*, but apply himſelf to the True *Means* of *Information*; and if he miſcarries, tho' he may one day anſwer for any *Sinister Motives*, that carried him into a wrong Determination; yet GOD will find Methods to ſupport his own Deſigns, and conſequently advance the Intereſts of the

the True Religion, by Secret and Inviſible Springs, tho' his Ordinary and Standing Proviſions afford the moſt unlikely Proſpect. Sometimes Perſecution it ſelf is the moſt prolifick Soil for the True Religion to ſhoot forth and flouriſh in: *Chriſtianity* had not only its firſt Foundation in it, but we are aſſured received Great Increaſes from it. So *Tertullian* in his *Apologetic* boaſts, *Nec quicquam tamen*, ſays he, *proficit exquiſitior quæque crudelitas veſtra*, ILLECEBRA EST MAGIS SECTÆ. *Plures efficimur quoties metimur a vobis.* SEMEN EST SANGUIS CHRISTIANORUM. *Tertull. Apolog. pag.* 45.

But in a word, if the Care of Religion is a ſtanding Duty, in the Magiſtrate; (as has been abundantly evinced) and if there be ſuch a thing as a True Religion, and ſufficient Means (if duly attended to) to diſtinguiſh it from the Falſe; the Undoubted *Rule* is, That the *Duty* is to be *purſued*, and the Conſequences left to the Providential *Care* of the Bleſſed *Author* of it; who has the Hearts of *Kings*, and the Sovereign Diſpoſal of *Grace*, and

will

will in the Courſe of Affairs undoubtedly aſcertain the *Uſefulneſs* of his own Means, and the *Ends* of *Religion* for which they were deſigned. And as for that Magiſtrate, who upon a Principle of Zeal for the Honour of his *Maker*, ſhall thus carry on the Deſigns of the True Religion, he'll no doubt one Day be made partaker of a Reward, that will every way anſwer *that labour of love, which he has ſhewed towards his Name*; he'll one Day infallibly find a Remembrance, ſutable to the Supplications of that Excellent Governour *Nehemiah, Remember me, O my* GOD, *concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the Houſe of my* GOD, *and for the offices thereof*, *Neh.* 13. v. 14.

SECT. IV. I proceed to the ſecond Enquiry, *viz. When there are two, or more Sects of Religion under any Government, why the Magiſtrate is under an Obligation of protecting, or rather advancing the one, more than the other?*

And *Firſt*, I ſhall conſider this Argument, with regard to the *Oeconomy* of the *Chriſtian Church*. And in order to this

it

it will be requiſite to enquire into the Rights, and Authority of a *National Church.*

And, *Firſt,* its indiſputably evident the *Chriſtian Church* is one *Society*, or *Body* of Men united to CHRIST, and *each other* in certain *External,* as well as *Internal* and *Spiritual* Bonds of Union. It's truly a *Seamleſs Garment;* nay, it bears the Exact Portraicture of a *Natural* Body, *whereof* CHRIST *is the Head, from whom the whole Body fitly joyn d together, and compacted by that which every joynt ſupplieth, according to the effectual working in the meaſure of every part, maketh increaſe of the Body, Eph.* 4.16. In a word, it carries the Symmetry and Proportion of a *Building, fitly framed together, growing into an holy Temple in the* LORD, *Eph* 2.21. The firſt Diviſion of this Spiritual Body, ariſes from the *Neceſſity of Divine Worſhip;* viz. into particular Congregations. Other Diſtributions ariſe from the *Neceſſity* of *Government*, which is warranted and eſtabliſhed, by the expreſs *Canon* of Scripture. Thus, *Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves, for they watch*

for

for your Souls, Heb. 13.17. And St. *Paul's* Inſtructions to *Titus* are, *For this cauſe I left thee in* Crete, *that thou ſhouldeſt ſet in order the things that are wanting*, Ch. 1. ver. 5. And, *Theſe things ſpeak and exhort, and rebuke with all Authority*, Ch. 20. We may add to this, the *Power* of *Binding* and *Looſing*, and *Excommunication* it ſelf, being expreſly committed to the *Eccleſiaſtical Powers;* and evidently demonſtrating the *Neceſſity*, as well as *Divine Authority* of Eccleſiaſtical Government.

But to return: Whatever Diſtributions were made, either from a Neceſſity of Worſhip, or Government, every Branch or Part, is indiſpenſibly bound to maintain this Myſtical Union; by a Communion in the Eſſentials of *Faith, Government*, and *Diſcipline:* for otherwiſe it's impoſſible the *Chriſtian Church* ſhould anſwer the Character of a *Natural Body fitly joyned together, and compacted by that which every joynt ſupplieth, even to the making increaſe of the Body.*

As for the Government of the Church, we are aſſured, partly from *Scripture*, and partly from the *earlieſt Antiquity*, That

 the

the Order of *Biſhops* and *Metropolitans*, reſts on *Apoſtolical Inſtitution*. Both *Timothy* and *Titus*, in the judgement of the moſt Learned *Presbyterians*, were Superior to the reſt of the *Clergy*, within their *Diſtricts*, at leaſt in *Juriſdiction*, if not *Order*. And tho' *Antiquity* has not expreſly fix'd the Origine or Riſe of *Metropolitans*, yet it may juſtly be preſum'd to be *Apoſtolical*.

For *First*, St. *Paul* directs an Epiſtle to the Metropolitical Church, to be communicated to the whole Province; for ſuch was *Corinth* in the Province of *Achaia*. *To the Church of* God, *which is at* Corinth, *with all the Saints that are in all* Achaia. And, purſuant to this, we find the Governments of *Metropolitans* in the firſt Council of *Nice*, ranked among the Αρχαῖα ἤθη, *Ancient Cuſtoms*, *Can.* 6. and in that of *Antioch*, ſtyled Αρχαιότερον κεκρατήσαντα πάντων ἐκ τῶν ἡμῶν κανόνα, The *moſt ancient Canon in force, from the times of our Forefathers*. But that which conduces to the preſent Argument, is, *That all the Eſtabliſhments of Church Government*, and *the Diſtricts of particular Churches, were originally modeled*

deled according to that of the State. The Biſhop preſided over a City, and the adjacent Villages and Territories; where a Temporal Magiſtrate was likewiſe placed. As the *Metropolis* of every Province had its *Proconſul* in the *State*, ſo it had its *Archbiſhop*, or *Metropolitan* in the *Church*. And when the Government of *Patriarchs* prevailed, it was formed after the ſame Model, either in Imitation of the *Vicars*, or *Lieutenants* that preſided over a *Dioceſe*, compoſed of ſeveral Provinces; or at leaſt in Imitation of the *Pretorian Prefects*, that had ſeveral *Dioceſes* under their Juriſdiction.

Upon the whole then, as we are aſſured, That the forming a Government in the Church, after the Model of that of the State, was by *Apoſtolical Inſtitution*; ſo we may juſtly conclude, that it was by the ſpecial Directions of the *Holy Spirit*. And, no doubt, the great Deſign was to advance the Intereſts of *Religion*, by placing every particular *Church* under the *Protection* of the *State*, whenever it ſhould become *Chriſtian*. And certainly, as it was the only true Expedient to enable the Civil

Magiſtrate, to execute that Truſt, that is lodged in the Character of a *Father*, or *Nurſing Mother*, to the Church of *Chriſt*; ſo it's a conſiderable Argument that the Care and Protection of the True Religion is a ſtanding Duty, incumbent on the *Civil Magiſtrate*. For to make the Diſtricts of particular Churches, terminate with thoſe of Civil Governments, was abſolutely neceſſary, to make the *Civil Magiſtrate* the Supreme Guardian of the True Religion: and, ſince 'tis an Ordinance, that may very juſtly be reſolved into *Apoſtolick Inſtitution*, it's a manifeſt Indication, that the Civil Magiſtrate ſhould be obliged punctually to anſwer the Character, whenever he became *Chriſtian*.

Sect. V. From hence we may gain a true Notion of the Rights and Authority of a *National Church*. And truly, if we duly weigh the Premiſes, we muſt conclude, That it reſts upon nothing leſs than *Divine* and *Apoſtolick* Inſtitution. For if the *Apoſtles* themſelves conſtituted particular Churches, with regard to the Diſtricts of particular Provinces, and the Government

vernment of the State; and if it be a ſtanding Duty in the Chriſtian Magiſtrate, to protect and advance the *True Religion*, within his Dominions; we muſt conclude, That a Church is to be eſtabliſhed upon that Model of Government, which was inſtituted by our Saviour, or his Apoſtles, in every reſpective Nation, over which the Magiſtrate is to preſide, as a *Father*, or *Guardian*, and *Protector*; and ſuch a *Church* is what in other terms is called a *National Church*; and a Church thus eſtabliſhed, undoubtedly reſts on the Authority of *Divine* or *Apoſtolick* Inſtitution.

I would not be miſtaken, as if I intended to deny the being of a *National* or *Provincial Church*, till it has obtain'd a *Civil Eſtabliſhment*; for it's manifeſt, the Churches of *Greece*, and of the *Proconſular Aſia*, had a being, and a diſtinct Denomination, before *Chriſtianity* was received in the *Courts* of *Princes*. Indeed when a particular Church enjoys a *Civil Eſtabliſhment*, it receives, as it were, a new *Authority*; in as much as it becomes a *Civil Right* or *Property*: So that unleſs its Conſtitution is *Materially* vitious and ſinful, it's a high piece of in-

juſtice

juſtice to deſtroy or infringe any of its *Eſtabliſhed Rights*, or *Immunities*. But yet ſince the Magiſtrate is only the *Guardian*, not the *Founder* of a National Church, (its Original Authority reſting on certain poſitive *Laws*, and *Sanctions*, enjoyned by a Power ſuperiour to that of the Magiſtrate, even that of GOD *Himſelf*) where-ever a Church in any Province or Nation, profeſſes the True Religion by an Orthodox Faith, and a pure Worſhip, under *Lawful Church Governours* and *Paſtors*, that is the *True National Church*, in oppoſition to all diſſenting *Sects* and *Parties*; tho' it wants the Authority of a *Civil Eſtabliſhment*.

But to return: From hence we may eaſily determine the merits of the Queſtion in debate, I mean *When there are two, or more Sects of Religion in any Government, why the Magiſtrate is under an Obligation of protecting, or rather advancing the one, more than the other?*

For, *Firſt*, it is abundantly demonſtrated that the Chriſtian Magiſtrate, *ex officio*, is conſtituted a *Guardian*, *Father*, and *Protector* of the True Religion; and there-

therefore if in any Nation, or Government, the true Religion is profeſſed in an *Orthodox*, and a *pure Worſhip*, under *lawful Church Governours* and *Paſtors*; there the Magiſtrate is indiſpenſibly bound to act as a Guardian and Protector, in oppoſition to all Models, and Platforms that are advanced againſt it. For by this alone he purſues the Great Deſign of the *Apoſtolick Platform*, in the Inſtitution of *National Churches*, as well as anſwers that of his Character; I mean as he's Prophetically ſtyled, a *Father* to the Church of CHRIST.

It's certain one Great Deſign of Chriſtianity, is *Unity*; or to range all the Parts and Members of the Church of CHRIST into an *Holy Building*: and therefore, if the Magiſtrate is conſtituted a Guardian of the True Religion, all his Offices of *Succour* and *Protection* muſt be directed to this End; I mean the maintainance of the Bonds of *Catholick Unity*, throughout his whole Dominions. Without this, the Great Ends, and Propoſals of ſo pure and holy a Religion, cannot be accompliſhed; and therefore whatever Indulgences, or Exemptions the Chriſtian Magiſtrate may right-

rightfully grant to *Erroneous Judgments*, or *Conſciences*, acted with ſimplicity and a pious Diſpoſition; he cannot upon the *Laws and Oeconomy of the Goſpel, or any Authority derived to him from thence, rightfully* give a *Poſitive Eſtabliſhment*, within the Diſtricts of the ſame Government, to two *Oppoſite Communions*, or *Altars* of *Worſhip*; eſpecially when one of them is founded in a revolt, from a *pure* and *Orthodox National Church*. This is the very reverſe to a *Protector* and *Defender* of the True Religion. For it implies a power to *pervert* the Great Deſign of the Chriſtian Religion; *viz.* a *Unity* of *Faith* and *Worſhip*; by diſſolving the Bonds of *Catholick Unity*, and Authorizing the Members of CHRIST'S *Myſtical Body*, to disband and break into *Schiſms* and *Factions*: whereas it's an External Rule, That the *Magiſtrate* can only challenge a Power to *Edification*, not to *Deſtruction*. This is ſo far from being a Prerogative of the Magiſtrate, that where a National Church is conſtituted under *Lawful Governours* and *Paſtors*, tho' there may be ſome Defects, or Errors in her *Faith, Diſcipline*,

ſcipline, or *Worſhip*; he's not to *unhinge* and *demoliſh*, but to endeavour to *correct* and *remove* them, by ſuch *Means* and *Inſtruments*, as GOD, in his revealed Will, has decreed and appointed: and when this is done, he's not to ſuffer any oppoſite *Sects*, or *Factions*, ſo much as to *break in* upon any of her *Apoſtolick Rights*, or *Immunities*. For it's manifeſt, the Duty of a *Guardian*, *Parent* and *Protector*, is to uſe all prudent Methods to *cultivate* and *improve*, to *advance* the *Intereſts*, and *enlarge* the *Priviledges* of thoſe under his Care; much more to defend them from *Violence*, or *Incroachment*. To be appointed a *Father*, and a *Protector* of CHRIST's Church, or the True Religion, is not an Empty Name, but carries very momentous Offices and Duties in it: it implies a *Zeal* for the *Honour of* GOD, and the *True Religion*; and conſequently it engages the Magiſtrate to ſtudy ſuch wholeſom Proviſions, as will advance the Ends and Intereſts of it, to the utmoſt Boundaries of his Dominions: and thoſe that thus *wait for* CHRIST, *ſhall not be aſhamed*, *Iſai.* 49. *v.* 23.

And now, *Sir*, I hope I have prepared You for the main Argument You propoſed, by informing You how the Magiſtrate is determined, for the Intereſts of Religion, and particularly thoſe of this *National Church*.

SECT. VI. I ſhall proceed to conſider, *Whether the Reſtraint of the* PRESS, *is not a Neceſſary Proviſion, not only to advance the Intereſts of the True Religion, but to preſerve, and maintain the Ends aud Deſigns of it, as profeſs'd in a National Church*? And this will appear from the *Neceſſity* of a publick Eſtabliſhment in Religion, and the *Pernicious Influences*, which the *Liberty* of the *Preſs* has upon it.

It's already concluded, that GOD has inſtituted a Governing Power in the Chriſtian Church; and the accommodating it to the Diſtricts of the State, and the Conſtituting the Civil Magiſtrate a *Guardian*, and *Protector* of the Church of CHRIST, is at leaſt a ſufficient Warrant of the *Lawfulneſs* of a publick Eſtabliſhment, if not an Indication of its *Neceſſity*.

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Indeed since there are Governing Powers in the Church of CHRIST, we must conclude, that GOD foresaw a great many Difficulties and Miscarriages, under the great Revolutions and Emergencies of Human Affairs; which he has Authorized them to *adjust, correct* and *remove:* and this will justly infer the Necessity of publick *Decrees, Articles,* or *Canons,* and that too in Matters of *Faith, Worship,* and *Practice.* It cannot be denied, but *Scripture* it self has established the Authority of such Powers, and Injunctions; and consequently it's an indisputable Argument of their *Necessity:* since GOD never imparts special Powers, or Functions, but he infallibly discerns the Necessity and Usefulness of 'em. Thus we have General Rules directed to particular Churches, in the business of Publick Worship, *That things be prescribed, and done according to the Laws of Decency, Order, and Edification.* And no doubt St. *Paul* points at the same thing, when he reminds *Titus,* why he placed him over the Church of *Crete, That thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting: Tit.* 1. 5. So that we may justly conclude,

there's a Power given to preſcribe ſuch Laws and Rules, and make ſuch Publick Declarations, as manifeſtly tend to the *Edifying the Body of Chriſt;* or as are requiſite to maintain the Catholick Laws of Unity, or the *Unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace.*

But to deſcend to particulars. And *firſt*, as to matters of Faith; Indeed it will be eaſily granted, That the Holy Scriptures are a compleat *Rule* of *Faith;* and conſequently they ſeem to be a competent Standard, for the Governours of particular Churches, to try the *Faith* of *Chriſtians* by. But yet we are aſſured that they contain a *Great many things, hard to be underſtood, which the ignorant and unlearned wreſt to their own deſtruction;* and conſequently things of the greateſt moment, and importance. Again, we are aſſured, that *Hereſies* will come, that there will ariſe *Falſe Chriſts*, and *Falſe Prophets*, and *Men of corrupt Minds*, who have not only *erred*, but are *reprobate concerning the Faith.* In a word, it's impoſſible but Controverſies and Diviſions, as well as Offences, will come; this is the caſe of every

every Tribe, or Colony of *Christians*.

And is there no Judgment to be made in these Circumstances? Are these Persons to be suffered to proceed in their Errors, and *pervert* the *Faith* of others? If this must be so, for what End has the Blessed AUTHOR of our Religion placed *Governours* and *Pastors* in his Church, and enforced their Authority by the Discipline of special Censure? They cannot remonstrate against them, without making a Judgment whether the *Doctrine be of* GOD, or is consonant to the *Canon* of *Faith*. And yet 'tis their Duty to declare the *whole Counsel of* GOD in these Cases. And certainly, if *Private Pastors* are Authorized to expound the Sence of Scripture, and make a Judgment in these Matters, and expect the Directions of the Holy Spirit, to wait on their pious Labours, and Endeavours; much more may an *Assembly*, or *Council* of *Church-Governours* interpose, state the Sence of Scripture, and deliver a Definitive Sentence in express *Articles* and *Decrees*, and expect the Influences of the same *Spirit* in the whole performance. Certainly, where *two or three*, or more, are for these Ends

Ends *gathered together*, (it may juſtly be preſumed) GOD *will be in the midſt of 'em.*

Theſe are Proceedings warranted by the Practice of the College of Apoſtles, and of all particular Churches, from their Days, to this very Hour: Such Errors, Diviſions, and Miſcarriages *concerning* the *Faith* authorized, and gave birth to the *Confeſſions* of *Faith*, in all Particular Churches. They were the only Barriers againſt *Hereſie* and *Error*, and indiſpenſibly neceſſary, to preſerve the *Unity* of the *Faith*, and the *Church* of CHRIST, from Diſtraction and Ruine. To affirm that Scripture in theſe Caſes is a ſufficient Rule, and reject all Interpoſals, or Determinations purſuant to it, is to miſtake or perplex the Argument. For tho' Scripture is an adequate Rule of Faith, and Manners; yet GOD has conſtituted *Guardians* and *Truſtees*, to aſſert the Sence of Scripture, and enforce a Faith and Practice, conformable to it: and to deny this, is in effect to diſcard the neceſſity of any *Viſible Miniſtry*; ſince Scripture, with the help of private Reaſon, is as much an adequate

quate Rule in this reſpect, as the other; and conſequently there could be no neceſſity of a ſtanding Miniſtry. It's true, theſe *Publick Determinations*, theſe *Confeſſions* of *Faith*, are not eſtabliſhed upon a *Spirit* of *Infallibility*: but they are not to be rejected, or leſs *neceſſary*; becauſe not *Infallible*. GOD has not thought fit to impart a Spirit of Infallibility, in the Exerciſe of the *Power* of *Excommunication*; yet Scripture eſtabliſhes it as a *Standing Ordinance* in his Church A Spirit of Infallibility does not accompany the *Miniſterial Function*; and yet GOD has made it abſolutely neceſſary. In a word then, in as much as they are Deciſions grounded on *Scripture*, ſupported by *Reaſon*, and confirm'd by the joynt *Authority* and *Suffrage* of the *Church* of GOD, in the earlieſt Ages, and of *Saints*, *Confeſſors* and *Martyrs*; they are the moſt appoſite Moral Inſtruments, under GOD, and the uſe of *Reaſon*, to determine the *Judgment*, and ſatisfie the *Conſcience*; or at leaſt to ſtop the Mouths of *Gainſayers*, as far as concerns the outward *Peace* of the *Church*.

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In this Caſe, they become indiſpenſibly neceſſary; there muſt be ſome External Umpire and Deciſion, where Matters muſt at laſt terminate: that the publick Peace and Unity (things in the judgment of our Bleſſed Saviour, of the greateſt value and importance) may not be ſacrificed to the Diſſentions, Heats, and Animoſities of Corrupt and Reſtleſs Spirits.

If ſuch Decrees, or Injunctions are not to be impoſed as *Eſſentials* of *Faith*, or *Terms* of *Communion*; yet they are, in the Language of our Church, to be received as Injunctions *for the avoiding Diverſity of Opinions, and for eſtabliſhing Conſent touching True Religion*: Or, in one word, as *Articles* of *Peace*; ſo that whoſoever publickly oppugns 'em, is at leaſt to be cenſured, as a Breaker of the Peace of the Church.

But further, as to the Duty of *Publick Worſhip*, it's undeniably evident, the great *Circumſtantials* of Worſhip are no where determined in Scripture, ſuch as the *Time*, *Manner*, and *Place*; and yet theſe are Moral, and inſeparable Circumſtances, without which 'tis impoſſible the Duty

Duty can be performed. And therefore it's abſolutely neceſſary, they ſhould be committed to the Determination of thoſe Powers and Authorities, GOD has conſtituted in his Church. For tho' this, or that *Particular Determination* be not neceſſary, till 'tis ſettled; yet it's abſolutely neceſſary, they ſhould be *determined ſome way or other.* And this demonſtrates the Neceſſity of Publick Eſtabliſhments, in the Duties of Publick Aſſemblies, and Publick Worſhip.

Again, as to the Caſe of Diſcipline, how can that *Decency*, *Order*, and *Uniformity*, which the Word of GOD ſo paſſionately recommends, be maintained without the Eſtabliſhment of Diſtricts, and the Settlement of Time and Place? how can the Manners of Men be animadverted on, or their Neglects, or Irregularities in the Publick Worſhip of GOD be cenſured? what muſt become of the Publick Duties of *Admonition* and *Reproof*, and *Excluſion* from the *External Means* of Salvation, to the *Correction* of Offenders, *Removing* of *Scandal*, and the *Deterring* of others? Theſe are ſuch clear and uncon-

troublable Evidences of the Neceſſity of Publick Eſtabliſhments, that we find them in all the *Churches* of the *Saints*, or Chriſtian World: and the Civil Government, agreeable to the Prophetick Character, is the profeſſed *Guardian*, and *Protector* of 'em.

SECT. VII. It now remains, *That we conſider the* Influences, *which the* Liberty *of the* PRESS *has upon an* Eſtabliſhment.

And certainly, where Men are under an unlimited Allowance to publiſh their Sentiments of things, it's the *Publick Eſtabliſhment*, that muſt ſuffer the ſharpeſt attack. It's this that bears the ſhew of *Authority* and *Dominion*, or ſtands between its Adverſaries, and ſome beloved Intereſts. It's the only Check to the Ambition, Avarice, Luxury, or Impurity of a *Licentious World*. When this is born down by *Calumny* and *Sophiſtry*, and brought into diſgrace, there's nothing left to obſtruct a general Licentiouſneſs. So that the greateſt Libertine may plead a Right, not only to erect his own Scheme, but to do whatever ſeemeth right in his own Eyes. And therefore, the common Torrent of Vice will

will not only bear down upon her; but thoſe more active Furies, Envy, Malice, Prejudice, and Revenge, will unite to form an Indictment. In a word, an Eſtabliſhment as ſuch, is markt out as a Common *Enemy*, againſt whom every Tribe and Sect, of how different a Make and Complexion ſoever, are prepared to unite and arm: and when they may do it at ſo eaſie an Expence of Danger, or rather under the Banner of *Freedom* and *Liberty*, no wonder if they *ſhoot forth their Arrows, even bitter words*; and are content with nothing leſs, than reducing the whole Oeconomy to deſolation and ruine.

SECT. VIII. GOD knows, we are not now left to view the force of the Argument, in empty *Theory* and *Notion*, ſince we may read it in Matter of *Fact*, and Obſervation. What Branch of our Eſtabliſhment, of moment and importance, has the *Liberty* of the *Preſs* left free and untouched? Has not the *Divinity* of our SAVIOUR, and the whole Doctrine of the *Ever-bleſſed* TRINITY (as delivered in our Articles) been run down, and diſcarded, by a whole ſhoal

of Pamphlets? Has not the whole Design of CHRIST's *Mission* been industriously overturned, and the Doctrine of His *Redemption* and *Satisfaction*, by the *Offering up* of *Himself*, been peremptorily rejected, as *groundless*, *absurd*, and *impossible*? [See *Atheist turned Deist*, Sect. 42, 43, 47.] Has not Reason been asserted, to be the only Measure of Faith; so that whatever cannot be comprehended by it, is to be rejected from being an *Article of Faith*? [*Christianity not Mysterious*] Has not an Assent to this single Proposition, *Jesus of* Nazareth *is the Messiah*, been asserted to be the only explicite Article of Faith necessary to Salvation? [*The Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 43, 49. 192.] Has not Revelation it self been disputed and rejected, as an incompetent Rule to Mankind! [*Oracles of Reason*, Let. 3. 14.]

Lastly, As to our Offices of Publick Worship: Has not the *Press* brought Scandal and Reproach, upon two of the Anniversary Solemnities of this Church, tho' enjoyned by Acts of *Parliament*, viz. The *Martyrdom of King* Charles *the First*, and the *Restauration of this Church and Mo-*

Monarchy, in the Return of King Charles *the Second*? For do we not find it expreſly vindicating the whole Scene of Violence, tranſacted in that Bloody War againſt the *King*, and ſtigmatizing the great Inſtruments of the *Reſtoration*. Nay more, we find the very *Author* applauding himſelf, as having a Point of Honour done him, by being choſen one of the *King*'s Judges. [See *Milton*'s Εἰκονοκλάστης, falſly pretended to be printed at *Amſterdam*, and *Ludlow*'s Memoirs, *London*, *Vol.* 2*d. p.* 871.] Theſe are the bleſſed Products of the *Preſs*, laid open, and proſtituted to the Wit and Malice of deſigning Men; and yet they are but the ſmall Gleanings of that Maſs of Filth and Corruption, it has brought forth. And what can more directly tend to a total ſubverſion of an *Eſtabliſhment*, and more effectually prepare the World, to believe the Truth of their repeated Declamations; *viz.* That *Creeds and Syſtems, are only profitable Inventions*, or rather, That the whole *Oeconomy* of our *Eſtabliſhment* is but *Secular Policy*, and the Arts of *Prieſtcraft*. The *Preſs* has already publickly declared thus much; and that

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Coldneſs, or rather *Air* of *Contempt*, that too generally prevails againſt that of this *Church*, abundantly demonſtrates the pernicious Influences of it.

But now to improve the Argument: It's already concluded, That *Eccleſiaſtical Eſtabliſhments*, or *National Churches* are indiſpenſibly neceſſary; they reſt on the Authority of *Apoſtolick Inſtitution*, and are confirmed from the very Nature and Deſign of the *Chriſtian Religion*. It's concluded, That the *Chriſtian Magiſtrate* is by *Divine Appointment*, conſtituted a *Guardian* and *Protector* of *National Churches*, within his reſpective Dominions: It's a ſtanding Truſt committed to him by the Laws of *Natural*, as well as *Revealed Religion*: If therefore the *Liberty* of the *Preſs*, is highly deſtructive of the *Intereſts* of *Religion*, and particularly as 'tis cultivated in *National Churches*: If it appears not only in the Nature of the thing, but upon unqueſtionable Matter of *Fact*, the *Magiſtrate*, who by Divine Appointment is conſtituted a *Guardian* and *Protector* in the cauſe of *Religion*, is indiſpenſibly bound to remove the miſchief, by laying

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a powerful Reſtraint on the *Preſs*. In a word, it is concluded, If a *National Eſtabliſhment* is any way defective, or unſound in *Faith*, *Worſhip*, or *Diſcipline*, the *Magiſtrate* is to endeavour a Reform, in a *Regular* and *Canonical Method:* and this, I'm confident, was never declined by the *Eſtabliſhed Church* of *England;* but if nothing of this Nature can, with any force of Argument or Reaſon, be charged upon *Her*, then the Magiſtrate, *ex officio*, is bound to *protect* and *defend* Her, in the Purity of Her *Faith* and *Worſhip*, and in Her juſt Rights and Immunities, *excluſive* of all other *Sects* and *Parties;* eſpecially where the Publick Peace and Unity is attempted by 'em. If therefore the *Liberty* of the *Preſs* is apparently prejudicial to Her *Intereſts*, *Rights* and *Immunities*, or the Purity of her *Faith* and *Worſhip*, I cannot find how the Magiſtrate can fairly be ſuppoſed to diſcharge that Truſt GOD has laid upon *Him*, without laying a publick Reſtraint upon it.

SECT. IX. But further: The Reſtraint of the *Preſs* is neceſſary, if we conſider the per-

pernicious Influences it caſts upon *Religion* in *General*, as 'tis the direct *Inlet* to *Scepticiſm*, *Hereſie*, and *Infidelity*. It's certain the Attempts of a Licentious *Preſs*, are almoſt infinite, and inconceivable. *Error*, as well as *Vice*, is extreamly prolifick, and even as numerous as the ſand of the Sea; the moſt virulent Poiſon may be gilded over, and Varniſh and Colour may be laid on the fouleſt Cauſe; and conſequently the *Preſs* may be the Parent of the groſſeſt Errors, under the Mask of *Innocence*, *Zeal*, or *Charity*. And truly, if *Experience*, and *Matter of Fact*, muſt decide the Controverſie, we are convinced, that the Lewdeſt Notions that ever entered the Heart of Man, have been of late advanced from the *Preſs*. And moreover, the Miſchiefs that are this way propagated, are much more fatal than any other.

Firſt, Becauſe 'tis the moſt *Effectual* way of *Communicating 'em*. A Tranſient Harangue or Diſcourſe, tho' never ſo malignant, cannot be ſo entirely lodged in the *Memory*, as totally to infect the Judgement: and after this, it paſſes not much beyond the *Preſent Audience*. But the

Preſs

Preſs is a ſtanding *Monument* and *Record*, that not only communicates the whole Poiſon, and leaves it to *reſt* upon the *Mind* or *Judgment;* but conveys it to *Poſterity*.

Again, as the Miſchief is more *ſucceſsfully propagated;* ſo 'tis more *difficultly removed*. The Men of Learning, Judgment, and Probity, may be engaged in Matters of too great Importance, to be at leiſure to obviate the *Miſchiefs* of every *Poiſonous Libel;* but if it happens to receive a juſt Confutation, it's odds it either reaches not the deluded *Reader*, or loſes its juſt Efficacy by not preſenting it ſelf before the *Infection* is rivetted, and the Defence of the Error become a *Point* of *Intereſt* or *Honour*.

But that which is more fatal than all this, is, an Unreſtrained *Preſs* gives a kind of *Imprimatur* to every thing that comes from it. As the Caſe ſtands, the Generality of Mankind are ſcarce able, or at leiſure to detect the falſe Colours of an *Artificial Harangue;* much leſs enter into the *Merits* of any particular *Controverſie;* and in theſe Caſes, where a right Judgment

cannot be made, every thing that appears in publick, muſt paſs for *Orthodox*, unleſs it has ſome publick *Note* of *Diſtinction* fixed upon it. So that the moſt *Heterodox Poſitions* in this Caſe reſt upon equal Authority with the moſt convincing Truths, till they have received a Cenſure from the *Government*, either in *Church* or *State*. And ſince *Paradoxes* are capable of receiving a *plauſible Dreſs*, and *Downright Contradictions* may be advanced, under a ſhew of *Argument*; what fatal Conſequences may not we juſtly dread, when *Religion* is the ſubject of both? The Injudicious and Illiterate *Reader* is expoſed to the Rack, and left to be divided and torn in pieces, between contrary Opinions; and either hangs ſo long between both, till he commences *Sceptick*, or *Infidel*, and *Believes Neither*; or at leaſt follows the Biaſs of *Luſt*, and *Corrupt Nature*; and is carried away with *Declamation* and *Harangue*, the *Uſual Artifices* of a *Bad Cauſe*; and conſequently is inevitably plunged into *Hereſie* and *Error*.

But further, the Miſchief riſes higher yet, for it's concluded, An Unreſtrained

Preſs

Preſs is often the moſt familiar with the *Eſtabliſhed Religion*, and never ſpares in bringing Diſgrace on any Branch, or part of it: It's the Publick Mark of *Envy* or *Malice*, and conſequently never wants the moſt Furious and Envenomed *Aſſailant*. But then, this is the direct *Method* to uſher in the moſt fatal Conſequences; for it will not only ſap the *Foundations* of an *Eſtabliſhment*, by bringing Her *Authority* into Contempt (it being the Moving Principle of all ſuch Attacks) but it ſtrikes at the *Reputation* of *Religion* in *General*, and makes way for reſolving the whole into *Sham*, and *Impoſture*. For when the *Government* ſuffers the *Preſs* to attack a *Received Article* of the *Eſtabliſhed Religion*, without the leaſt *Cenſure*, or *Controul*; an indifferent Judge muſt conclude, that both cannot be true: And becauſe *Authority* does not proceed, to Aſſert and Vindicate its own *Eſtabliſhment*, or upon a fair Eſtimate, eſtabliſh and determine for the *Truth*; he'll conclude, there's no real Difference between *Truth* and *Falſhood*, and that *Religion it ſelf* is nothing but a Set of *Maxims*, calculated according to the ſeveral *Aſpects*

and *Interests* of *Government*. This is so great a Truth, that I'm highly perswaded, those publick and repeated Attacks, made from the *Press* of late Years, upon the *Faith*, *Authority*, *Worship*, and *Discipline* of this *Church* (so many *Articles* of *Religion* having been so professedly questioned, and rejected) is the *Great Cause* of that *Scepticism* and *Infidelity*, or at least *Contempt* of *Religion*, which so visibly reigns in this *Nation*.

Give me leave to represent the Force of the present *Arguments*, in a single *Instance*. It's already concluded, that the *Press* has appeared in a Line of *Contradiction*, to two of our *Publick Offices* of *Worship*, the *Anniversaries* of that *Glorious Martyr King* Charles *the First*, and the *Restauration* of *King* Charles *the Second*. They are by *Royal Authority*, as well as *Statute-Law*, made part of our *Publick Service*. The whole Body of the *Clergy* are indispensibly bound to Celebrate them, and the whole *Legislative* Power, in a Solemn Manner, joyns in the *Celebration* of 'em; and yet we have Books published in Contradiction to 'em; published in the most

open

open and audacious Manner. For the *Preſs* has not done its Duty, by ſending 'em into the World, but they are publickly ſold in the Shops, and expoſed to ſale from our *Publick Prints*, and *Term-Catalogues*. Now, what diſmal Conſequences can we imagine muſt attend ſuch vile Practices? Our *Law-givers* piouſly declare, That *By the Murder of Our late Dread Sovereign, the* Proteſtant Religion *hath received the greateſt Wound and Reproach, and the People of* England *the moſt inſupportable Shame, that was poſſible for the Enemies of* GOD, *and the* King, *to bring upon us;* 12. *Car.* II. c. 30. But pardon me, if I pronounce the *Liberty of the Preſs*, to have advanced ſome Degrees beyond this: For the *Fact*, with its *Preliminaries*, is now not only levelled againſt the *Authority* of *Law*, and conſequently that *Blaſphemy*, and *Reproach* that is due to it, is renewed, and heightened; but a manifeſt *Blaſphemy* and *Reproach* is entailed on the very Cauſe of *Religion:* Such Allowances as theſe, muſt cauſe the *Enemies* of GOD to *Blaſpheme;* and tell us, that we either *Worſhip we know not what*, or that

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our *Worſhip* is a Solemn piece of *Mockery*, or at leaſt a piece of *Lip-Devotion*; or rather, that the whole of Religion is *Cheat* and *Impoſture*. For if theſe things be reconcilable, there can be no *Truth* nor *Reality* in Religion; and this or that Profeſſion, is no longer a piece of *Religion*, than it runs with the Tide and Bent of a Community.

But now when things diſcover ſuch a fatal Tendency as this is, if there be any ſuch thing as a *Guardian* of the *Church* of CHRIST, and if the *Magiſtrate* by *Divine Deſignation*, is inveſted with the *Character*, it muſt be an Indiſpenſible Duty to exert with Vigour, and Reſolution. The whole Caſe will turn upon a ſhort Iſſue; if upon a Due and Regular *Examination*, theſe *Religious Offices* are *Materially Evil*, and *Unwarrantable*; let 'em be ſet aſide, and aboliſhed, that GOD may be no longer *trifled with* and *blaſphemed*; nor His *Paſtors* loaded with *Hatred* and *Contempt*, by being bound up to the Obſervance of things that are not Warrantable: But if notwithſtanding the utmoſt Efforts of *Malice* and *Declamation*, they appear to be a *Pious* and a *Juſt Inſtitution*, the *Magiſtrate*, if ever,

ever, muſt be obliged to endeavour a ſpeedy Redreſs; and ſince theſe Miſchiefs apparently derive from the *Liberty of the Preſs*, certainly the *Truſt* of a *Guardian* can never be diſcharged, without deſtroying the *Evil* in its *Cauſe:* and conſequently without laying a Powerful Reſtraint on it. When a Miſchief is thus dangerous, and deſtructive, it becomes the proper ſubject of a *Law*, and is to be ſuppreſſed with all the Enſigns of *Authority* and *Power*.

And now, *Sir*, I hope I have, in ſome meaſure, anſwered Your Demands, and diſcovered the *Neceſſity of Regulating the* PRESS; and that too with Regard to the *Eccleſiaſtical Eſtabliſhment* of *this Nation:* and therefore I'm inclined to perſwade my ſelf, the *Argument* will have its juſt Weight, and Influence on Your *Zeal* and *Affection*, for the Publick *Good*, as well as *Judgment*. But that nothing may intervene, to cauſe a Miſcarriage, I ſhall endeavour a ſhort return to the moſt *Conſiderable Objections*, that have been advanced againſt it.

SECT.

SECT. X. And, *first, It may be objected, That the Miſchiefs of the* PRESS *may be effectually obviated, by* Particular Laws; *and that a* Reſtraint *of the* PRESS *from the Experience of former Times, has not prevented 'em.*

Now it muſt be confeſſed, That the *Law* produced in the laſt *Parliament*, may ſerve as a Bridle to the *Deiſt*, *Atheiſt*, and *Anti-Trinitarian*; but this can by no means obviate the Miſchiefs of a *Licentious Preſs:* For there are other Truths, and Doctrines ſet forth in the *Chriſtian Religion*, and this *Eſtabliſhed Church*; which if publickly oppugned, muſt prove highly Injurious to the *Main Deſign* of the Chriſtian Religion, as well as the *Peace* of the *Preſent Eſtabliſhment*, ſuch as the Doctrine of CHRIST'S *Satisfaction*, by the *Sacrifice of Himſelf*; the Doctrine of *Grace*, or *Divine Aſſiſtance*. How theſe have of late ſuffered, the Publick has been too lately made a Witneſs, if not a Judge.

But certainly, the Miſchiefs of the *Preſs* can never be fully obviated, unleſs by the *Reſtraint* of it; or at leaſt, by ſuch a *Law* as makes it highly *Penal*, to publiſh any thing

thing in Writing, that is level'd againſt any *Branch* of the *Eſtabliſhed Religion*; for ſince *National Eſtabliſhments* appear to be abſolutely Neceſſary for the Carrying on the Ends and Deſigns of the *Goſpel*, that which is amiſs is to be regularly corrected; and after this is done, nothing is to be ſuffered, that any-wiſe invades the *Peace* of ſuch an *Eſtabliſhment*.

But after all, *Penal Laws* of this Nature, are not ſo apt Inſtruments to prevent the Miſchiefs that uſually ſpring from the *Preſs*, as an abſolute *Reſtraint* of it, when the Authority of a *Licenſe* or *Imprimatur* is wanting. Such a *Reſtraint* deſtroys the Miſchiefs in its *Seeds* and *Principles*; it ſtops the Contagion in the very *Spring* or *Fountain*: whereas ſuch *Laws* take place at a Diſtance, it may be when the Infection is propagated to a conſiderable Degree.

There is a ſolemn Proceſs, and a great many Formalities, and Steps to be made, which may ſerve as ſo many Advantages, or Chances, to eſcape the *Force* of the *Law*. The *Author* is not only to be diſcovered, but an *Information* given in, and received too, according to the *Genius* and *Temper*

of the *Magiſtrate;* and conſequently the *Undertaker* muſt have Courage enough to bear the Title of *Informer;* an Office, which as the World goes, neither the *Juſtice* nor *Merits* of the Cauſe can ſecure from *Ignominy* and *Contempt.* Again; there muſt be a Proſecution by courſe of *Law,* and the Caſe examined, and tried whether it falls within the Penalty of the *Law;* and all this, perhaps, without the leaſt Recompence to the *Proſecutor,* for *Expences* or *Attendance.* In a word, a Verbal Recantation, after the Labour and Difficulties of Conviction, may render the Author *Rectum in Curia:* and after this, he may under Diſguiſe go afreſh to work, at the ſmall hazard of the leaſt of Puniſhments. I wiſh ſome Proviſions of this Nature had not been wanting in the late *Act againſt Profaneneſs and Immorality,* whereby a Pious Deſign may become Inſignificant and Uſeleſs. For upon this bottom, while the *Preſs* is open, I'm afraid the Enemies of our Eſtabliſhment will publiſh their Notions, with the Satisfaction of ſecret Smiles and Triumphs.

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But now if the *Preſs* were ſhut, till an *Imprimatur* is obtained, the mere want of one is a *Competent Evidence* for Conviction; and tho' ſome may be ſo daring to expoſe their *Notions*, at the hazard of their *Safety*, yet ſuch a Reſtraint of the *Preſs* gives this conſiderable Advantage, That whatever comes forth without Authority, carries its own *Mark* in the *Title-page*; and conſequently gives an Alarm to the incautious READER, of *Infection* and *Miſchief*.

SECT. XI. But *Secondly*, it is objected, *That ſuch a Reſtraint of the* PRESS *is a giving up the Conſciences, and Judgments of Mankind to a Party, and a condemning them to an Implicit Faith, and is a direct Method to involve the World in Ignorance and Error.*

As for the *Firſt part* of the *Objection*; If an *Orthodox National Church* is the *Party* intended, I may ſafely affirm, That as it is the Duty of every Perſon within her Communion, to conform to her *Faith*, *Worſhip* and *Government*; ſo I hope it already appears, that it's a ſtanding Duty

in the *Magiſtrate*, as well as *Church Governours*, not only to enforce all *Goſpel* Means to bring every Soul into the Pale of it; but to *Maintain* and *Cultivate* the Purity of its *Faith* and *Worſhip*, againſt all the Attempts of its Enemies. If any thing is unſound and deficient, GOD has inveſted a Power of uſing ſuch proper Means in the Governours of his Church, and the *Believing Magiſtrate*, as under his Divine Protection, will ſecure a True and Orthodox Religion; but if nothing of this Nature can be truly charged upon Her, when Endeavours have been made in this kind, tho' there may be no foundation, by Violence and Force, to compel Men to be of *one Mind*, and *one Heart*; yet the Magiſtrate is of *Right*, as well as *Duty*, bound not to ſuffer her *Peace* to be *Diſturbed*, or her *Faith* and *Worſhip ſhaken* by *Publick Harangues*, and *Profeſſed Declamations*: This is no Perſecution, but a Neceſſary Proviſion, whereby the Deſigns of an important Truſt committed to the Magiſtrate, are fulfilled and anſwered, I mean that of a *Guardian*; and ſince it is ſo, I cannot imagine why any Government

ſhould

ſhould be ſlack in the Exerciſe of a *Juſt Power;* eſpecially ſince all ſides are ſenſible how much *Unanimity,* in Matters of Religion, contributes to the *Publick Weal* of a Nation. And truly, if to this Juſt Law, another as *Equitable* were eſtabliſhed, *That Perſons who will not content 'emſelves with the Communion of the Eſtabliſhed Religion, ſhould thereby be uncapable of any Places of Truſt or Office, either in Church or State;* as we find it in Neighbour Countries, I queſtion not but it would have produced a greater *Unanimity* in Matters of Religion, than the moſt hopeful Projects of *Comprehenſion.* As the Caſe now ſtands, the Tolerated Party is envigorated with the Hopes of one Day reducing every thing to their own Model; but certainly had an *Incapaciting Clauſe* been fixed to the laſt *Act of Grace,* I mean that of *Toleration*, it would not only have proved an invincible Bulwark to our Pure and *Apoſtolick Eſtabliſhment,* but the moſt Healing Principle of Unity that could have been contrived, or thought of.

SECT. XII. But to return: As to the Charge of *Implicit Faith*, it muſt be confeſſed, That the Depriving Mankind of any of thoſe Means, or Inſtruments which GOD has appointed for the Diſcovery of His *Revealed Will*, is a direct Invaſion of the *Privileges* of a *Chriſtian*, and a conſiderable ſtep towards the Introduction of an *Implicit Faith*. But I preſume it cannot be pretended, that an *Unlimited Power* of *Printing* is one of thoſe *Means* which GOD has appointed for the Diſcovery of the True Religion. If ſo, GOD ſeems to have been very much wanting to his own Deſigns, in not communicating the Art by ſome *Apoſtle* or *Prophet*, long before it obtained in the Chriſtian World. But it's well known, the True Religion reſts upon other Foundations; it was *Eſtabliſhed* in *Purity* and *Perfection*, long before this uſeful Art was formed, or thought of; and I queſtion not, will long continue ſo, unleſs the *Privilege* of *Printing* the *lewdeſt* and moſt *Heretical Notions*, ſubvert its Foundations.

As for this *National Eſtabliſhment*, I challenge her moſt avowed Enemies to pro-

produce one ſingle Inſtance, wherein ſhe denies her Members the uſe of any *Divine* or *Apoſtolick Means*, that are Inſtituted for the Diſcovery of the True Religion. Our Church impoſes no Article of Faith upon pure Church-authorities; ſhe recommends every thing to the Mind and Conſcience upon rational Motives, and Convictions: She is careful to publiſh uſeful Diſcourſes, in Matters of Faith and Practice; and, in a word, every thing *that is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs, that the Man of* GOD *may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good Works.* She does not only allow, but exhort her People, *To examine themſelves whether they are in the Faith:* She denies 'em no Means of Information, ſhe does not only lay open the Well of Life, or Fountain of Living Waters, the *Holy Scriptures*, but recommends 'em to their Search and Enquiry, even to the Trying *of the Spirits* by them: She allows 'em to propoſe their Doubts and Scruples to their *Spiritual Paſtors*, and adminiſters Counſel and Advice upon the force of *Reaſon* and *Scripture:*

pture. In a word, as ſhe conceals nothing of the *whole Counſel of* GOD, ſo ſhe admits all their Propoſals, by way of *Enquiry* and *Information*: So that there is nothing wanting of thoſe Means GOD has inſtituted to enable every Man *To give a reaſon of the Hope that is in him.*

Where then is that *Nurſery* of *Implicit Faith* and *Ignorance*? If Mens Judgments by all theſe Methods cannot, or will not be ſet right and informed, ſhall they challenge a Right to publiſh Dogmatically, what they pretend to retain on no other Authority, than that of a weak Conſcience, to bear down *a rightful Eſtabliſhment*? Are all the *Means* of *Information* uſeleſs, and to be deſpiſed, if this is not ſuffered? Muſt they from *Examiners* and *Enquirers*, immediately commence *Doctors* and *Dictators*; and deliver their Sentiments with equal Authority to that of the *Eſtabliſhed Religion*? Where is that *Spiritual Tyranny*, or *Blind Obedience*; when they may propoſe their *Arguments*, *Doubts*, and *Scruples* to *Private Paſtors*, or a *Publick Convocation*; when they may depute *Proxies*, and be admitted to *Conferences*, and

and *Publick Debates*, without *Paſſes* of *Safety*, without the Dread of an *Inquiſition*, or of a *Writ de Hæretico comburendo*? Theſe are Privileges that may be obtained for asking; and they are the moſt appoſite Methods for the diſtinguiſhing Truth from Falſhood: They are ſuch as GOD has appointed, and conſequently ſuch as GOD may be preſumed to give a Bleſſing to. When therefore an Eſtabliſhment has done all this, ſhall the Magiſtrate that is conſtituted a *Guardian*, and *Truſtee* in the *Church* of CHRIST, ſuffer the Conſciences of Men to be diſtracted, and the *Publick Peace* of the *Church* invaded, by the bold Cavils and Harangues of every *Unreaſonable Gainſayer*?

SECT. XIII. *Thirdly*, 'Tis objected, *That every one, not only of* Natural Right, *but in point of* Duty, *particularly that of* Charity, *may and ought to publiſh whatever appears to be* Truth, *for the Information and Direction of others; and conſequently the Reſtraint of the* Preſs, *that abridges this Right, muſt be unlawful, and unjuſt.*

But, *First*, it's an indiſputable Truth, That the *Natural Rights* and *Duties* of *Private Perſons*, are perpetually conſonant to the *Rights* and *Intereſts* of *Publick Societies*; and the Exerciſe of the former, is for the moſt part to be regulated, and determined by the latter. Again, Whatever the Rights and Intereſts of Private Perſons may be, the Magiſtrate is abſolutely entruſted with the Preſervation of the Publick Peace; and conſequently may rightfully ſuppreſs every thing that is level'd againſt any Branch of the *Publick Eſtabliſhment*; ſince ſuch Attempts unſettle the Minds of a People, and engender intemperate Heats and Animoſities, and conſequently carry a direct Tendency to Diſorder and Confuſion.

All Governments give a latitude for *private Opinions* and *Sentiments*; and therefore do not uſually extend their *Teſts* or *Subſcriptions*, beyond Places of *Truſt* or *Publick Employments*: whereas 'tis their Care and Prudence to keep a watchful Eye upon *New Notions* obtruded on the Publick. Whilſt an Opinion reſts in the *Breaſts* of private Perſons, the *Publick Peace* is not ex-

expoſed; but when 'tis preſſed upon Mankind in *Publick Harangues*, and tranſmitted from the *Preſs* too; it gives Umbrage to the Peace and Weal of the Community, and conſequently calls for the Care and Vigilance of the Magiſtrate. In Caſes of this Nature, the firſt Chriſtian Emperors appear'd as *Guardians* in the Church of CHRIST, and vigorouſly exerted their Power and Authority, to maintain its publick Peace and Unity.

SECT. XIV. *As for the Duty of Communicating our Opinions to others, with a Deſign of Information, it is indiſputably to be regulated by two* Conſiderations.

Firſt, The *Importance* of the *Opinion*, and *Secondly*, The *Certainty* and *Evidence* of it.

Firſt, If the Opinion be ſuch as does not affect any conſiderable Intereſt of Mankind, or correct or remove any dangerous Error, but rather ſerves to entertain our *Speculation* and *Curioſity*, than regulate our *Conſcience* or *Practice*; there can be no Obligation to diſturb the World by oppoſing *Eſtabliſhed Doctrines* or *Notions*,

when after all they may carry in them greater Marks or Evidences of Truth, than a private Judgment can reaſonably pretend to.

Secondly, Unleſs our Opinions are ſupported by the cleareſt Convictions of *Reaſon*, or *Authority* of *Scripture*, (as all matters of Importance undoubtedly are) there can be no juſt Plea for *Duty*, to engage the reſt of the World to become *Diſciples* or *Followers*. And indeed it ſeems highly unreaſonable, that private Perſons ſhould amuſe the Minds of others by obtruding *New Notions*, when it may be they reſt upon bare *Probabilities*, or no higher Evidences than thoſe that have been *peaceably* received from *Publick Authority* in *Church* and *State*. If the Projections and Opinions of Men were governed by theſe Maxims, I'm perſwaded the *Reſtraint* of the *Preſs* (when it is thereby only committed to the Inſpection of *Publick Authority*) would ſeldom be interpreted a Breach of any *Natural Rights* or *Duties*.

SECT. XV. There now only remains an Objection no way worthy to be animadverted on,

on, except for its *Popularity* and *Modern Faſhionableneſs:* 'Tis this, *That the Reſtraint of the* PRESS, *is an Invaſion of the Liberty and Property of an* Engliſhman.

But I'm perſwaded before the Objection can juſtly take place, the *Privileges* of the *Preſs* ſhould be diſcovered to be an *Article* of *Magna Charta*, tho' it were ſome Centuries before *Printing* had its Beginning: But in a word, if the Power of Legiſlation is to be crampt, and fettered in the Caſe before us, I cannot ſee but that every Authoritative Regulation of the Actions of an *Engliſh* Subject, might be diſputed as a Breach of the *Liberty* and *Property* of an *Engliſhman*, and conſequently no Law could be eſtabliſhed, without firſt obtaining the Unanimous Conſent of the People.

SECT. XVI. And now, *Sir*, I have in ſome meaſure diſpatched what I propoſed, and You ſeem to have demanded; and tho' I have not expreſly replied to Your Enquiries in the very Terms, or order they were propoſed; yet I have the Vanity to preſume, That I have not only made returns to the Arguments contained in them; but

but diſpel'd that Cloud of Objections that of late has been raiſed to obſtruct the Reſtraint of the *Preſs*. If therefore what has been already offered has the good Fortune to carry the Balance, againſt Your former Sentiments, be pleaſed to ſuffer a ſhort Addreſs on my part, in the caſe before us, as a hearty Advocate for the Maintainance and Welfare of the *Government* in *Church* and *State*.

Sir, We have been hitherto engaged in the Cauſe of Religion, and the Methods of its Preſervation and Support. And the late paſſionate Addreſs of the laſt *Parliament*, and His *Majeſty*'s moſt Gracious Anſwer to it, ſeems to Authorize the Purſuit of the Argument. That *Venerable Body* wiſely applied Themſelves to their *Sovereign*, to conſult His *Pleaſure*, as well as excite His *Zeal* and *Piety*: and He was pleaſed to ſignifie His concurrence, and remit the Managery of the Affair to His *Houſe of Commons*, as to the proper *Inſtruments* to prepare Matters for the Formation of a juſt Law. It's true, that *Honourable Houſe* formed a Bill upon the preſent Argument; but the Miſcarriages of it,

it, where-ever juſtly to be fixed, cannot conclude againſt the Reaſonableneſs or Neceſſity of it. I'm confident the Eyes and Heart, the Hopes and Expectations of every *Engliſhman*, that is acted with a true Concern for the True Religion, are fixed on the enſuing Seſſion; and pardon me, if I flatter My-ſelf, That the Arguments already ſuggeſted, demonſtrate the abſolute Neceſſity of Reſtraining the *Preſs*, as an effectual Expedient to preſerve the Intereſts of it.

The Liberty of Printing without Licenſe or Inſpection, has ſufficiently diſcharged its poiſonous Influences againſt the *Intereſts* of the *Eſtabliſhed Religion*; and a ſmall tract of Time in the ſame Allowance, would demonſtrate its Force and Efficacy againſt the Intereſts of the *Civil Polity*, as eſtabliſhed in a *Monarchy*. I wiſh ſome late Eſſays had not aſſerted the Truth of the Obſervation: witneſs thoſe groſs Inſinuations the *Preſs* has preſented us with, for the preference of a *Republick* to that of *Monarchy*: [See *Ludlow's Memoirs*] Witneſs thoſe baſe and unwarrantable Characters vented in a late Paper, where-

wherein the preſent Reign ſeems to be blacken'd by the Help of a *Prophetick Spirit*, and making it an Acceſſary to what may come hereafter; where every Eſtate of the Realm, and every Order of Men in Authority and Places of Truſt, are deſcribed like Ruffians and Paltroons, rather than Perſons of Dignity and Honour. What can be the Scope of ſuch unmannerly Declamation, but to bring the *Engliſh* Conſtitution into Diſgrace, and prepare the Minds of the People for *Anarchy* and Confuſion. [See *The ſhort Hiſtory of Standing Armies in England.*]

But to return: You, *Sir*, and Your *Honourable Brethren*, are concerned as Truſtees and Guardians in part for *Religion*; and ſince the neceſſity of a National Eſtabliſhment is fully demonſtrated, all diſintereſted Perſons muſt conclude, That Your ſpecial Care and Inſpection ſhould be engaged to advance that of this Nation, of which You profeſs Your ſelves *Members*, and from whoſe *Communion*, by Civil Appointment, You receive Qualifications for *Places* of *Truſt*, or *Publick Employ*. A Temporary Intereſt may engage a great many

many Men, to declare 'emſelves *Members* of Her Communion; but it's certain the true Teſt of *Memberſhip* is to uſe all imaginable Endeavours to maintain her *Rights*, and ſupport her *Conſtitution*; whenever ſhe's publickly attack'd in any Branch of it.

To have the *Preſs* regulated by the received Doctrines of a *National Eſtabliſhment*, is to be eſteemed one of her *undoubted Rights* and *Immunities*; and therefore when Invaſions of this Nature are daily made, ſhe may juſtly expect the interpoſal of *Authority*: But if ſhe could not challenge thus much of Right, yet ſince the *Diſſenting Sectaries* have received very ample *Acts* of *Grace*, under the *preſent Government*; the *Eſtabliſhed Religion*, one would think, may reaſonably expect her tail in this kind, and command the *Preſs* in matters of Religion, as the *Firſt Act* of *Grace*; eſpecially ſince 'tis no more but what *Former Reigns*, by an indiſputable Authority, afforded her.

But to draw towards a Concluſion: Give me leave to tell You, *Sir*, If the *Reſtraint* of the *Preſs* cannot be obtained by way of

Right, nor Grace and Favour: I queſtion not but the fatal influences it has upon *Morality* and *Religion*, is Motive ſufficient to accompliſh it. I ſhall not reſume the Argument I have already enlarged on; but certainly it ſeems to be a fruitleſs Attempt to ſuppreſs *Immorality* and *Profaneneſs*, and eſtabliſh a Sence of *Religion*, and *Principle* of *Piety*, whilſt a latitude is permitted in the moſt publick manner, to diſpute the moſt *Sacred Points* of *Religion*, to decry *National Eſtabliſhments*, arraign the whole Order of the *Miniſters* of *Religion*, and the Solemnities of *Publick Worſhip*. It's impoſſible the generality of Mankind under theſe Inſtructions, can entertain any ſerious Thoughts concerning *Religion*, but are rather prepared to contemn and vilifie the *Bleſſed* AUTHOR of it, and the whole *Contrivance*: and therefore if *Morality* and ſtrict *Vertue* is purſued on theſe terms, it's more to be aſcribed to the happy *Genius* of Mankind, than any Principle of Religion. In a word then, If the Honourable Aſſembly of *Commons* is in earneſt for *Reformation* (as I queſtion not but they are) what has already been offered,

ſeems

ſeems to beſpeak the *Regulation* of the *Preſs* to be the moſt likely *Introduction* to it.

And now, *Sir*, I have delivered my Sentiments with as much Sincerity as Freedom. All that remains, is, If they happen to make You a *Proſelyte*, I hope You'll employ Your hearty Endeavours, in the Poſt You're fixt, to make the Argument the ſubject of a Law; and the greateſt Teſtimony of this will be, that Care be taken, not only that a Law be formed, which will effectually anſwer the Deſigns of it; but that the Forming of it be done with that Prudence and Caution, as not to give a handle to cruſh it in its firſt Production. When this is accompliſhed, it will lay perpetual Obligations of Gratitude and Reſpect towards the Inſtruments of it, on all thoſe in whom the Intereſt of this Government apparently conſiſts; *The True Members of the Eſtabliſhed* CHURCH *of* ENGLAND.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Pag. 1. *lin.* 1. *read* ſolicite. *p.* 24. *l.* 20. *read* Eternal. *p.* 49. *l.* 4. *dele* abſolutely. *p.* 65. *l.* 20. *read* Tale.

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